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CHORDS and DISCORDS

By

Walter Everett Hawkins

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Walter E. Hawkins

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BY

WALTER EVERETT HAWKINS

Author of "Sweet Dreams of You."

1909
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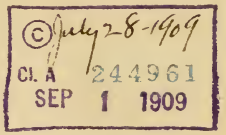

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DEDICATION.

To the memory of a resolute Father, whose stern Christian Character finds agreeable balance in the pliant devotions of a kindly Mother, and to a galaxy of Brothers and Sisters, whose kind indulgences have inspired my dreams, I dedicate this volume.

Introductory.

THE letter from the Author of these verses requesting a brief introduction discloses that, in putting before the public this modest little volume, he has, with no little reluctance, yielded to the requests of friends and to his own timid ambition and desire to serve a cause.

Yet his timidity denotes no cowardice, for he bravely takes his place with the advanced minority who are waging an unequal but righteous war against sordidness, opportunism and a "popular" sycophancy. Indeed he has forged to the very front in the battle-line—disdaining association with those who, although they may have been intrusted with the "five talents," intellectual, yet they skulk in the rear and exist on cast off loot or thrive by "sutlering" to first one army then the other while they rob the dead and disabled of both.

His lips having been "touched with a live coal from the altar" of race patriotism, he could not, if he would, fall away into the company of the panderers—those despicables, the present day "copper-heads," who, like their civil war prototypes, have been aptly described as without patriotism enough to join one army and without courage enough to join the other.

In his letter he says also that he makes no apology for seeking the company of those who scorn to profit by conceding, teaching and exemplifying race inferiority and subordination. Militant patriots will be proud to stand with him and the children of the Muses will not be ashamed to have him sit and sup with them.

While it is the qualities and efforts above outlined

that dominate and make unique this volume, there is herein amusement, exhortation, entertainment and instruction affecting in differing degrees different temperaments.

Critics and dissenters there will be in plenty, for sturdy truth does not generally provoke the loudest plaudits. The cuckoo's song, such as it is, and the parrot's prattle, which it probably does not itself understand, are more pleasing to the multitude than the eagle's scream or the lion's roar.

Emerson says:

> "The age wants heroes who shall dare to struggle in the solid ranks of truth: to clutch the monster, error, by the throat; to bear opinion to a loftier seat: to blot the error of impression out, and lead a universal freedom in."

F. H. M. MURRAY.

Alexandria, Virginia
July, 1909

Preface.

FOR the first time I make my humble bow to a critical public with fear and trembling: fear which naturally arises to a beginner in weighing his strength against countless master-minds, trembling, lest the world should say "Nay."

The unfavorable circumstances under which these verses were written could hardly justify my putting them before the public. Some were written, or at least begun in my earliest "teens," when my little world stretched just out across a few acres of corn and cotton to the little creek on the further side of the cow pasture; thence, back and up the lane to the old school house and back home again. Others, a little further on in the "teens," resting on my indulgent hoe or freighted bag between the cotton rows; others, sitting amid the clatter and clang and grime of railroad travel, or walking along the dusty thorofares of the town; or sitting in church under the inspiration of some lecture or sermon; or in the school room mid the bustle and hum of two-score obstreperous scholars; and finally, when sitting in my humblest of chambers, dreaming at my desk above my sister's piano-forte, I have felt some little wave of inspiration winging itself up from the soul of music which touched my heart-chords into song. It was then, if ever, that I may boast the distinction of having heard the rustle of the Muse's wings.

These verses just wrote themselves; I have merely been the instrument thru which some peculiar, unknown *something* has from early childhood been speaking. How near they may reach the mark of real poetry, I know not; but this is my apology: "What I have written, I have written."

My greatest reward lies in the hope that some "Chord" herein struck may in some measure redound to the inspiration of some boy and girl to aspire to all things in life that are truly beautiful, essentially pure, and intrinsically good and ideal.

If there be some "Discords" here which should seem harsh to some,—know that the harshest note that language owns is mild as childhood's lightest song compared with the pangs and afflictions of the oppressed.

I cast this little volume from me as an Appeal,—an Appeal to courageous, patriotic men and women of sound moral ideas and ideals of soul. In a measure I represent the wronged and oppressed, and have dared to paint in feeble rhyme the truth which millions feel but dare not speak; and have endeavored to weave my soul-convictions and observations into songs to inspire; hoping to assist in moving the scales from the eyes of the misguided and aid in pointing the way; weaving upon the distant Horizon just enough tissues of "nonsense now and then" to break the stretch and cheer the road.

Let no man accuse the author of attempting the unlikely or grasping after the unattainable. He would be ungrateful to his conscience and the God that inspires it did he not sing the song that floods his heart; and no disfavor will lessen his tender regard for these innocent ebullitions of hope; they are the transcripts of the soul-fires within.

Far in the distant somewhere, beyond the sickening shadows and the sordid strife of the world-clod, to joys of Life and Love, sweet visions beckon me. Shall soul of mine not mount? I prune my wings and fly.

To the world of critics, know this truth: Nothing herein is written to court the reluctant approval of men; for methinks it seemly, especially at "such a time as this" that they whom God has given tongues must speak not to placate nor please, but to spur and inspire. Likewise, does the writer realize to a most touching degree the awful ban and proscription placed, and by many of his own, upon that class of men who dare have the hardihood and courage to aspire for something in life more than the "loaves and fishes," and to reach out and up for the ideals.

Let the world regard this attempt as it may; for like John Brown, the Sainted,—"I expect nothing but to 'endure hardness;' but I expect to effect a mighty conquest even tho it be like the last victory of Samson."

Sincerely,

THE AUTHOR.

Warrenton, N. C.
July, 1909.

Chords and Discords

Off to the Fields of Green.

I was the wayward child, you know,
As the family records plainly show;
They all were honored excepting me,
The rottenest limb on the family tree.
"Stubborn," "selfish," so they sneer,
"Rather peculiar," "odd and queer,"
"Couldn't be loving, and wouldn't obey,
Born for his freedom and to have his way,"
Temper! the like was never known,
Such as King Leo couldn't down;
Would fight! altho in every one
Thrice whipped he'd be when each was done.
And when the time for reckoning came,
Which one it was to bear the blame,
Perhaps a lie would stain my lip,
And then beneath the chastening whip
I'd reap my dues, and off I'd skip—
Off to the fields of green.

Nine stalwart boys to brave the work,
One wayward chap to hide and shirk;
Nine champions bold with pick and spade
One dreaming youngster in the shade.
What e'er the blame would chance to be
It all was sure to fall on me;
But when the time for feasting came,
Ten heroes joined the festal game.
Thru all the conflict firm I stood,
As bravely as a youngster could;
For thus 'tis said in every age
It is a common heritage,
That one should bear his brother's blame
And share alike another's shame.
A witch stepped in the family pot
At times, and things grew hot somewhat,
And things began to boil and bubble—
(I never like to trouble trouble)
My hound and I to join the chase
Would steal away and off we'd race,
With yelp and yell and quickened pace—
Off to the fields of green.

To chase the hare—what grander joy
Can thrill the heart of farmer boy,
When skies are blue and fields are green,
And nature wears her robe of sheen
When flowers gay and tempting shade
Combine to make the heart feel glad,

And songs of birds and brooklets gay
Combine to chase dull care away?
But after awhile the summons came
To go to school—(Am I to blame
Because I saw my honored name
Inscribed upon the halls of fame?)
I left my hoe upon the farm,
The bucket fell from off my arm,
Wherewith from out the hillside spring
I'd bear the liquid offering.
I proudly walked mid classic halls,
Where classic lore rang from the walls,
And sweet Pierian Springs sprang up,
Where young Ambition fain might sup
The treasured nectar from the bowl
To quench the thirst within the soul.

But while I drank to youthful dreams,
Too soon I muddied up the streams;
For I was young, and youth is rude
Untamed by years of hardihood;
And so we claim boyhood's careers
The scapegoat of our after years.
Demerits forty, plus threescore
Stood 'gainst my name—it took no more
To have my name—(Alas! for shame!)
Erased from off the walls of fame.
I stood before the College Judge,
But young ambition didn't budge,

Except to hang my head in shame
Of banishment beside my name.
The sentence read in language bold ,
My pulse stopped still, my heart froze cold :
"You're guilty, Sir, of many a flaw
And oft have rudely broke the law ;
And since you will not keep the rule,
We now dismiss you from the school!"
Well, since I found it hard to stay
And no tears the debt to pay,
I packed my bag and sailed away—
Back to the fields of green.

But they who pray shall never lack ;
Thru mercy's prayer they took me back,
And at the shrine I pledged my truth
To be no more the wayward youth.
And they who once would oft deride
The wayward boy now said with pride
And smiling face and grateful look :
"A clever chap when with a book."
And since vacation days have come,
And school is out, the paths lead home,
They who once scorned the heedless lad,
And called him names that sound so bad
Now think it not a sacrifice
To bend their wills to his advice.
And with reflection o'er the scene
Of by-gone days I stroll the green

With dog and book and yearning soul
To reach ambition's hoped-for goal.
And yet despite the worldly glare
Of pomp and wealth, of jewels rare,
In all the world wherein we rove
I boast but one—a mother's love.
And still a child, to life unknown,
I'll be a man some day, I own ;
And then, perchance, I shall obey
The things my friends will have to say.
But long as hope rides o'er the storm,
And fires of life and love burn warm,
I seek no watchman on the wall
Excepting brave ambition's call.

With that Great Pilot at the helm,
No waves can my little bark o'erwhelm ;
I'll bravely breast the raging waves,
And gently sail the deep, dark caves
Till I shall reach my Haven sweet
And lay my trophies at His feet ;
And by that fair Celestial throne
I'll wait to hear His sweet "Well done."
And should I reach that Happy Land
Where Christ sits at His God's right hand,
Where—when the heavenly trump shall call
The sons of earth both great and small
To give account of what they've done,
What battles fought, what victories won

The sheep run in to the Shepherd's fold,
  The goats go shivering out in the cold,
Where the good shall lie in pastures green,
  And the young lambs on His bosom lean—
May I not blush to hear my name,
  May I not hang my head in shame;
But there rejoice that He hath smiled
  To welcome in the wayward child,
Where free from toils and pain and care,
  Where all is love and all is fair—
If I meet none save my mother there
  Then off to the Fields of Green.

The Birth.

When pregnant darkness ruled the pale
  His Spirit on the darkness shone;
Chaos in travail rent the veil—
  The morning broke, and Earth was born.

Wail on a Wicked Bachelor.

Ho, every one who would be wise !
Come, hearken to my wail ;
The hero if ye should despise,
Spare him who tells the tale.

A bachelor lived in our town,
As sour as the rest ;
He won distinction and renown,
As one ill-tempered pest.

A selfish life this bachelor led,
Within his lone retreat ;
The hungry thrice per day he fed
When *he* sat down to eat.

He claimed no comforts for his lot,
No bounties he desired ;
The outcast shared his humble cot,
Whenever *he* retired.

He grumbled with both quick and dead,
As he alone could wish ;
He on the waters cast his bread,
When he went off to fish.

A proverb heard this wicked soul,
"Go to the ant ; be wise ;"
Straight to his aunt he went and stole
Her gold before her eyes.

At length he sought a wife to wed,
To share his ill-got pelf;
He found a wizen, witch-like maid
As wicked as himself.

They growled and grumbled night and day,
Each struggling to be free;
Too much alike in every way
For either to agree.

At last she took his coffee cup,
And doped it on the sly;
And when he drank the final drop
At once fell back to die.

And when upon his dying bed,
His head bent to his breast,
He lifted up his feeble head
And made one last request.

He asked her that his money go,
To bachelors who were free;
She hurled one sharp, defiant, "no!
I'll spend it all on me."

Once more he lifted up his head,
Defiant eye met eye;
He sprang up from his bed and said:
"I just refuse to die!"

Criticism on Biography.

Among the many things in life
  Which I should like to know—
Is how can men e'er reach the top
  Who started down so low?

He who was born in palace halls
  And rocked in riches' arm,
When he grows up his life begins :
  "I started on a farm."

He who was born with wealth and lands
  Inherited from his kin—
Rises to fame and he began:
  "Most destitute of men."

He who was born mid charms of gold,
  His cup with nectar sweet,
When he grows up his life begins :
  "I broke rocks on the street."

He whose rich voice and princely form
  The senate halls adorn,
"Was once a bootblack on the street,
  And on a farm was born."

He on whose brow no drop of sweat
  Has ever wet a hair,
"Toiled on life's weary, rugged road
  With head and feet lay bare."

And so I read biographies,
They fill me with surprise ;
Half of it all is, I conclude,
A good write-up of lies.

A Spade is Just A Spade.

As I talk with learned people,
One remark they often make
Quite beyond my comprehension,
But I yield for conscience sake ;
That 'tis best not be too modest
Whatsoever thing is said ;
Give to everything its color,
Always call a spade a *spade.*

Now I am not versed in Logic,
Nor these high-flown classic things,
And am no adept in solving,
Flighty aphoristic slings ;
So this proverb seems to baffle
All the efforts I have made--
Now what else is there to call it
When a spade is *just a spade?*

Be True.

Deep down within this failing frame
  Dwells an immortal Voice,
It keeps the soul with hope aflame,
  Makes languid life rejoice.
Be true to Life and Love we must,
  Sweet conscience's voice obey,
Preserve with care His sacred dust—
  The everlasting Yea
Speaks from beneath this crumbling clod,
  "To Truth be true — obey."

Judge not this crude external clod,
  Too rude in clay 'tis wrought ;
Within with the Eternal God
  And Life the soul is frought.
The clod may crumble, not to die,
  But that it may reveal
That Conscious Self to God so nigh—
  That Undying Ideal
Lives thru the sinful, sordid strife,
  Foretells a brighter day—
Be true to Self, to Love, to Life,
  To Truth be true — obey.

Too Much Religion.

There is too much time for doctrine,
  Too much talk of church and creeds;
Far too little time for duty,
  And to heal some heart that bleeds.
Too much Sunday *Church* religion,
  Too many stale and bookish prayers;
Too many souls are getting ragged,
  Watching what their neighbor wears.

What's the diff'rence twixt a washing
  Whether in a creek or bowl,
Since the love of Christian duty
  Reigns supreme within the soul?
All the unction and the washing
  That the Church on earth applies
Won't suffice to clean a sinner
  If his heart is choked with lies.

There is too much talk of Heaven,
  Too much talk of golden streets,
When one can't be sympathetic
  When a needy neighbor meets.
Too much talk about the riches
  You expect to get "up there,"
When one will not do his duty
  As a decent Christian here.

There is too much Sunday goodness
When you gather at the Church,
While next day you spurn a brother
Who has fallen in the lurch.
There is too much mournful preaching,
Talking of the things to come;
How can you live straight in Heaven
When there's crookedness at home?

And you needn't think the angels
Have no other work to do,
But to stitch on fancy garments
To be packed away for you;
For some people live so crooked,
Those robes may refuse to fit.
Let us have less talk of Heaven
And do right a little bit.

The Falling of A Star.

'Tis the story of a woman,
Born and lapped in riches' arms,
Wealth and honors, fame and fortunes
Lavished all their worldly charms.
All the charms the world could offer
Brought their revenues of gold,

And the wealth from every quarter
Sheltered underneath her fold.
So she lived in royal splendor,
And with gaudy equipage ;
Servants waited round her portals,
She a queen of lord and sage.
Men of wealth and worldly wisdom
Poured their treasures in her shrine;
If they might but only woo her,
And around her table dine.
Thus to woo this favored maiden,
And to win her fair young hand,
Men of every stage and station
Came to her from every land ;
But in vain their hands they offered,
Save the one of wealth and fame ;
Nothing great was there beside it—
Virtue, honor, but a name.

Vanity and vain desire
Raised her high upon the stage,
And to fortune's temple wafted
In her gaudy equipage.
Strangely, truly, vain as mortals,
With an eye of sullied lust,
Took the crown from fortune's mansion,
Laid art's temple in the dust.
When society's fashions won her

It was on a ball-room floor,
Where she made her first appearance—
It was pleasure — nothing more ;
But the vanity of pleasure
And the thirsty greed of men
Proved too great and strong a tempter—
She was tempted there to sin.

There amid her first carousing—
(What a sad and solemn thought!)
When she drank the health of pleasure
That the cup was poison frought.
So she drank; and O for woman,
When she stoops to take a sup,
Seeing not the deadly poison
Lurking deep within the cup!
What can recompense the folly?
O, the grave and solemn shame
The moment vice and desecration
Enter in her sacred frame !
Fair her face was as a sunbeam,
And a stately, queenly form ;
Every fibre in her features
Added lustre to her charm;
But her mind was as polluted
At the stagnant pools of sin,
And her heart was stained and foul
As the crimes she bred within.

Alas ! her fortunes proved a vapor,
Like the glories that have flown ;
They who ran to offer treasures
Turned their heads in bitter scorn.
Fame and fortune, wealth and riches
Wait their wings and take their flight;
Pomp and pride can not sustain them,
Unsupported by the right.
And she fell from fame and fortune
Like a meteor from the throne,
To the depths of dark perdition,
Lost, forgotten, and unknown.
O, the vanity of fashion !
If our hearts would disenthrall !
Vaunting pride and vain ambitions
Are forerunners of a fall.
Outward form and hues external
Are too often vainly wooed ;
Many a fair and dainty flower
Harbors poison in its bud;
Many a fair and polished temple,
Seemingly where angels dwell
Is the portal to destruction,
And the by-path down to hell.
Truth and pride are not congenial;
(And to prove the assertion true,
Beauty is not akin to virtue,
Save where virture paints the hue.)

What a solemn trust in woman!
How like Heaven she should prove!
Something more than merely human,
But a part of things above.
Last and best of God's creation,
Let the world not on thee frown;
Pride of Heaven and earth, O woman,
Prove thyself creation's crown.

To "The Guardian"

of Boston, Mass.

God called thee in a dreadful time,
hy race's life was crushed;
Thy earliest note brought hope sublime,
When bridled tongues were hushed
Against the wrongs ten millions face
With hearts bowed, bleeding, torn—
Thou rose like Atlas with thy race
Upon thy shoulders borne.

The blood of heroes spurs thee up,
The shades of martyrs gone
Return to bless thy bittered cup,
And bid thee live—fight on;
The spirits of the dead arise
Vile treason to dethrone—
The God of all eternities
Still bids thee live—fight on.

And in this awful, awful hour,
When manhood's but a name—
When greed of gold and lust for power
Have sold a race to shame,
Great God, sustain the warrior's arm
Who strives in freedom's cause,
And save a race from sordid harm
By Thy eternal laws.

Our strength is tied, our tongues are still,
We are but free in name,
Crushed is our pride by wrongs that chill—
Results of slavery's shame;
In blinding darkness still we grope,
Not slaves and yet not free;
With bleeding souls in prayer and hope
We wait and watch for Thee.

Great God! and shall the traitor live
In such an awful hour?
O, could some hero quit the grave
To down deception's power!
Up men with vengeance in your sword
The hypocrit to slay!
The Harpies on his flesh shall goad,
And on his vitals prey.

As "Liberator" saved the slave,
Thou "Guardian" guards the free—

Uncompromising, stalwart, brave,
And still more strong to be ;
Fight on ! the right shall yet prevail,
The God's are all with thee ;
The spoilor and his snares shall fail,
The captive shall go free.

No base proscription tinged with greed
Doth curb thy upward flight ;
Not color, kindred, kind, thy creed,
But "Fight with might for right" ;
Thy righteous cause no bribe shall tinge—
How brave 'neath awful ban
To dare to make a coward cringe,
And dare to be a man !

Wrong's Reward.

It is writ in truth eternal,
And the stars of heaven tell,
That he who dares to do the wrong
Has pitched his tent toward hell ;
For his steps shall lead him downward,
And his tottering limbs shall fall,
And the wrath of God's defiance
Shall surround him like a pall.

It was sung at earth's awakening,
'Twill be sung when earth is past,
That the cup of worldly pleasure
Is embittered at the last.

'Tis more deeply still recorded —
Dread injunction 'gainst the strong —
Men like Autumn leaves shall tremble
When they dare to do the wrong.

Decked with thorns the Right may suffer,
Wrong may triumph with his crown:
At the stake the Truth may falter,
But His Providential frown
Breeds eternal retribution,
Tho the debt may linger long,
But the dread recoil is coming
To the man who does the wrong.

King and Queen may rise and revel
In the wealth of life they hoard,
'Neath their sway the slave may swelter
Underneath his master's load —
Potentates may reign in power,
Vile at heart, but great in song;
But the Gods hold vindication
'Gainst the man who does the wrong.

Lo! the avenging arm of Justice
Holds aloof the awful stroke;
But in pity still He stays it —
'Tis to man a mocking joke.
O, when patience is exhausted!
Wearied out redemption's song!
Men like Autumn leaves shall tremble
When they dare to do the wrong.

Money.

The Song of the Worldly Man.

O money, mighty, gilded King,
To thee with all my might I cling.
Before thy gilded throne I pray,
Thy merry jingle cheers my way.
Almighty dollar, God of power,
Across the world looms up thy tower;
And men and nations bend the knee,
And life is sacrificed to thee.
Who is this God I must obey
When pride of money cheers my way?
I hold the world, what more is there
That I should bend my knee in prayer?
'Tis by my gold that nations rise,
And temples tower to the skies,
And mighty kingdoms wax and wane,
But thou, my gold, dost still remain,
And over man thy sway still rules,
Contempt of sages and the pride of fools.
And happy I, tho fool, obey
And fall submissive 'neath thy sway.
And yet, somehow, I love thee, Gold,
A mighty power thou dost withhold;
By thee I rule the headless clan,
And purchase nations to a man;

I rob the church and steal her name,
And lead the christian off to shame ;
I soothe one heart, another break,
I give her bread, her virtue take.
But what care I for right or wrong ?
Give me my gold, my wine, my song !
What more can life or Heaven hold
Than pride of mine? my Gold—my Gold !
I crave no joy that mortals hold —
I love my Gold — I love my Gold !

Where Air of Freedom Is.

Where air of freedom is
I will not yield to men —
To narrow caste of men
Whose hearts are steeped in sin.
I'd rather sell the king,
And let his goods be stole,
Than yield to base controle
Of vile and godless men.

Where air of freedom is
I will not yield to men.
I'd rather choose to die
Than be a living lie —
A lie in all I preach,

A lie in all I teach,
While Truth within my heart
Its burning fires dart
To burn my mask of sin.
I'd rather vict'ry win
Thru martyr's death than grin
At wrongs of godless men.

Where air of freedom is
I will not yield to men.
I spurn the alms of men,
The livery of kings ;
I own far nobler things.
I'd rather choose to own
The pauper's garb and bone,
The eagle's eye of truth,
The lion's strength of youth,
The liberty of thought,
A free man's right unbought,
A conscience and a soul,
Beyond the king's controle
Than be the lord of slaves,
Of quaking, aching slaves,
Of senseless, soulless knaves,
Or seek to revel in
His ill-got wealth and fame,
His world-wide name or shame,
His liberty to sin —
I will not yield to men.

Immortality.

Whether a place or a condition,
  Or however the future be—
I know there is a Heaven of bliss
  Prepared somewhere for me ;
And if the lake be burning where
  "The hell-worm never dies"
I have this consolation still —
  That's for my enemies.

Ode To Ethiopia.

Think not, O Ethiopia,
  Thy gift to greatness small ;
Within the courts where glory dwells
  Hangs high upon the wall
The scroll of fame whereon thy name
  In burning truth sublime
Tells of thy deeds which shall survive
  The crumbling years of time.

Tho earth ungrateful for the blood
  Thy sons have fed her soil,
And man forget the virtue of
  Thy ever matchless toil ;
Eternal Truth shall weave in song
  Thy gift to martyrdom
To be the theme of angels in
  The crowning years to come.

What grander boast than boast of mind,
  Of might, of heart and soul?
What nobler triumphs dare to find
  Adornment on life's scroll
Than conquests wrought mid stripes
      and chains
  Despite the chastening rod?
Thy ebon Royalty remains
  The sanction of a God.

Go, Saxon, from Gibraltar search
  To shores of Hebrides,
Search from fair Hellas on the South
  Beyond the Northern Seas,
You find no such heroic race
  As thy black fellow man —
We fling defiance in thy face,
  The black man leads the van.

Thy palest son e'er bleached by snows
  Blown from fair Caucasus height
Can boast no richer laurels won
  Than by the black man's might;
No generation, kindred, kind,
  Nor race, nor tribe, nor clan,
Has triumphed mid such threatening doom—
  The black man leads the van.

O Ethiopia, my pride,
  I love thee as a bride,
The ebon richness of thy hues —
  I clasp thee to my side;
From thy rich blood brave kings have sprung
  And choicest queens are born,
Thy velvet beauty dearer far
  Than palest lily grown.

Tho savage might may lead thee forth
  And spoil thy happy isle,
And weld the chains to mock thy pride,
  Thy fairy lands defile;
Thy master soul 'neath shattered dreams
  Doth still shine forth serene —
Despite the dreams that might have been,
  Thou art thyself, O Queen.

The Church Seeker.

I have thought of the denominations
  Abounding on every hand,
And wondered just who is in the right way
  That leads to the blest Promised Land;
When each calls the other in error,
  To comprehend seems pretty hard,
While all seek to reach the same Heaven,
  And worship the very same God.

Now, there stands the one with his dogmas,
  One jot to none else he concedes;
Another fixed in Confirmation,
  Another confessions and creeds.
They pass to and fro with their doctrines,
  In form pouring forth their complaints,
Enough to quite frighten the sinner,
  And well-nigh embarrass the saints.

I think I would like to be Quaker,
  Forgetting the things of the sod,
And silently sit in His temple
  And hold close communion with God.
And then when His Spirit should move me,
  I'd wash in the blood from His side,
Then meekly I'd lay down my burden
  At the cross of the pure Crucified.

I should want the grave Bishop confirm me,
  His priest standing close by my side,
And swear to the meek Convocation —
  My conscience should then be my guide.
Then taking the harp and the psalt'ry
  I'd chant the sweet : "Praise, ye, the Lord,"
The "Thirty-nine Articles" guide me
  Straight on to the Kingdom of God.

Then I'd like to just lay down my ritual,
  With none save the Testament New,
And empty my soul of emotion,
  As only a Baptist can do.
Then take me right down to the Jordan,
  And bury me deep 'neath the wave ;
Then washing myself of defilement,
  I rise newly-born from the grave.

I would like a pure Methodist sprinkling,
  For so spoke His prophet to men ;
"I sprinkle clean water upon you,
  And ye shall be free from your sin."
Then I think of anointment of Aaron —
  The ointment ran down from his head,
Like dews running down from Mt. Herman—
  Then I feel sweet atonement is made.

I'd be just a good Baptist-Quaker,
  Confining my service to none,

A true Methodist-Presbyterian,
And orthodox Christian in one, —
A Catholic-Episcopalian,
Withal, a confirmed Proselyte
Of pure Congregationalism —
I'd then stand a chance to be right.

I could just quit them all and then listen
When the old folks spread open their soul,
And sing of the aches and the sorrows,
And the balm that doth sweetly console ;
Then just float right on into Heaven,
On the wings of the soul-thrilling song,
And then sit right down in the Kingdom
By the ransomed in that blood-washed throng.

To The Hypocrit.

I would rather pass over
The infidel's creeds,
Or pardon with pity
The meanest of deeds,
Than once coincide
With the king's haughty airs,
Or dare to be moved
By the hypocrit's prayers.

The man who complains
When the world is all song,
Or dares to sit mute
When the world is all wrong—
Who barters his freedom
Vile honors to win,
Deserves but to die
With the vilest of men.

I've respect for the sinner
Standing boldly aloof;
I've respect for the skeptic
Demanding his proof;
For their sins are uncovered,
Their creeds are all known,
If I should fall victim,
The fault is my own;

But the man who will cloak
In a flattering disguise,
And preach what he knows to be
Slanderous lies,
Is unworthy to rest
'Neath the commonest sod;
He is mocked by Eternity,
And scoffed by his God.

To W. E. Burghardt DuBois.

Let darts assail his plaited mail,
  Who stands alone for right;
Let scorns of men and hisses rail
Against his armor—all will fail,
  Nor threat, nor thrall shall fright,—
Hero is he who dares assail
The wrong till wrong shall quake and quail,
Who stands mid lightning and the gale
  Alone with God and Right.

O Ethiope, arise, shake off thy wail,
  For unto thee is born a Galahad—
Thy peerless Knight to win the Holy Grail,
  In whose undaunted strength thy sons are glad.
He bids thee rise above the sordid sod,
His trenchant sword doth carve the rising road
    That leads to hills of God.

DuBois brave, we love thee for thy might,
  We glory in thy cultured, winging soul;
All thine beyond the "Veil" fair realms of light,
  And thou wouldst have us seek the highest goal.
Thy noble soul is not content with bread,
But Manna from the hills of God instead,
    Where Heaven's love is shed.

With thunder thou dost thunder back at wrong,
  Thy great ideals will make a nation free ;
Thy lightnings pierce the evils of the strong,
  And thou dost make no tame apology.
While moles may not attain unto thy flight,
Both men and angels follow thee to light,
    O noble, princely Knight.

Or fame, or blame, thou givest man his due,
  Nor flinch when Justice bids thee strike the wrong ;
Thou givest right and wrong their proper hue,
  Demanding what most rightly doth belong.
Tho baser men assail thee, thou dost stand,
Tho no vast armies follow thy command—
    God's still at thy right hand.

And thou dost not accept inferior place,
  For thou art part of God like other men ;
Nor dost thou grin at wrongs done to thy race,
  Nor seek thru fawning art applause to win.
Thou playest well and best the master role,
Illuming baser parts with gift of soul—
    Thou playest for men, not mole.

And what is wealth or worldly praise to thee?
  (Thy eagle wings—they stretch too far for men)
Thou seekest for a higher liberty,
  And carest not the fickle crowd to win.
Thy kingdoms are the stretch of moral worlds,
Adorned with freedom's intellectual pearls,
    Where light of God unfurls.

O Child of Night, all Heaven bids thee fly ;
And soaring high pluck from thy wings a quill,
And dip it in the stars of Heaven's sky;
And pen thy race's name on Heaven's Hill.
Then angels' harps attuned to chords unknown
Shall chant the pulsing strain from throne to throne
Of one so nobly born.

The Warbler and the Worm.

High over the vale the warbler perched,
The whole surrounding main he searched;
All creatures else he would engage,
As if the world were built his stage.
He poured his heart full out in song,
He warbled thus the live day long,
Nor thought what time or tide might bring;
His theme was but to soar and sing.

A worm was plodding in the wood
A-hoarding in his Winter's food;
And thought the warbler vain and wrong
To waste the precious hours in song.
A critic bold with voice as firm,
Spoke out his wrath, thus did the worm:
"'Twere better far for all thy kind,
If thou wouldst leave thy song behind;
Thy lazy lay's a dodge to shirk—
The noblest duty lies in work."

The warbler paused awhile to hear
What truth the worm's dull note might bear—
"I pity thee, poor toiling worm,
Doomed to the dust to slave and squirm.
Thou crawlest the earth—thy glory ends
Where royal rule of mine begins."
And once again his lay began,
The whole gamut of song he ran.

The bird's rebuke in language gruff,
Chagrined the worm to make rebuff:
"I am the monarch of the soil,
And find a comfort in my toil.
I knead the soil and work for man,
That he may feed and clothe his clan;
I am forerunner of the plow—
Far less a benefactor thou."

And so the worm turned to his load,
And plodded on along the road.

The warbler proudly spread his wing,
And perched on higher bough to sing,
As if to spurn the worm's dull fee
And better show his royalty;
And conscious of a nobler pride,
He thus to plodding worm replied:
"And what is life without a song
To cheer the road you plod along?
My song gives ease unto thy load,
Nor do I crave the things you hoard:
My kingdom is the stretch of wing,
With royal right to soar and sing;
The realms of light and life are mine,
A kinship with the things devine;
I spurn the dismal vale you plod,
I mount up to the hills of God."
And proud to be a warbler born,
He raised his note and still sang on.

And warbling warbler warbles song,
And worming worm doth worm along;
Each conscious of superior worth,
Each priding in a nobler birth.
And man is warbler, also worm,
He soars and sings and stoops to squirm;

He worms along to get his food,
And sings to make it sweet and good.
At morn he wrings from earth her fee,
At evening turns to minstrelsy.
Where none will toil—a sickly throng,
And worse with none to cheer with song.

The Black Soldiers.

Have you heard the story of the conflict?
Has the song of poet told it true—
How the Blacks have fought to win their freedom,
How they died with those who wore the blue?
All the rhyme and measures of the poet
Fail to add true lustre to his name,
Nothing save the flashes of his musket
Justly light his hidden scroll of fame.
It was in the struggle of the sixties,
When the chains of thraldom held him tight,
Must he wear oppression's stripes forever?
Shall he seek his freedom in the fight?
Came the message "Men of might are needed,
Dark Rebellion creeps upon the land;
No blacks need apply," the orders stated,
"Only whites are suited to command."

But the conflict deepened at Manassas,
And "disunion" stared them in the face,
Foes of freedom struck a blow of triumph,
Stained the nation's banner with disgrace.
And like forest fire raging onward,
East to West Rebellion led the van,
Leaving in its pathway grim destruction—
A country found her slave was more than man.
Gladly beating plowshares into swords,
Beating hooks for pruning into spears,
He became the Demon of the battle,
Dreading not the battle's burning fears.
Thus he plunged into the bloody conflict,
Still undaunted by its death and heat,
Wrote the name of "Freedom" 'cross the heavens
Saved the Union from a dread defeat.

Who will say the black man is no soldier?
Who will say he is not brave to fight?
Stript of every chance of fair distinction,
With no armor save his naked might—
Thrown upon the belching breech at Pillow,
Atlas-like the nation's load he bore;
And at blazing Hudson still a martyr,
Dying with the banner at the fore.
In the sternest struggle e'er recorded
Torch and ax were laid upon the tree—
He was first in dying for his country,
Freeing it and, yet, himself not free.

O, could pen of poet paint the story,
How amid the dread, unquenching flood,
Caring naught for fame and less for glory,
With his musket wrote his name in blood.
Listen to the story told at Wagner,
Before whose guns like leaves brave heroes fell,
How the Fifty-fourth of Massachusetts
Conquered and outbraved the fires of hell.
Day and night they march and falter never,
Hungered and aweary from the strife,
Knowing naught of comfort nor of shelter,
Counting not the priceless boon of life.
Down upon them rained the shells of Wagner,
In their tracks the blood was streaming down—
"Who will bear the flag upon the ramparts?"
Did the black man falter with a frown?
Forward sprang the gallant sergeant Carney,
With a brave resolve to do or die—
"I will bear it up," the Sergeant shouted,
"Or else report to God the reason why!"
Fearlessly he grasped the starry standard,
Only as a god or demon could,
And upon the bloody heights he pinned it,
Fixed it fast and sealed it with his blood.
Wounded thrice they bore him from the conflict,
Bleeding, torn, his comrades gathered round,
As they cooled his bleeding brow he murmured:
"The old flag never touched the ground."

Love's Unchangeableness.

The kingdoms of ages have gone,
They crumble and lie with the sod;
Like leaves their rich glories are strewn—
They return to their doom or their God.
And where is the pride of the past,
The glories of earthly domains?
They fall 'neath the withering blast—
And yet, O, yet love still remains.

And what of fair Athens and Rome,
The pride that they once boasted of?
They fade as fades beat of the drum,
Into common clay they dissolve.
And Babel to dust doth return,
The builders took His name in vain;
But flames of fair friendship still burn,
And pleasures of love still remain.

We watch the bright trend of the age,
And gather its wisdom and lore,
Commune with the Savage and Sage,
And snatch from Dame Science her store;
But wealth and all wisdom may fail,
And Want follow fast in their train;
Still over the wreck and the pale,
The emblem of love will remain.

To Booker T. Washington.

Who would condone the wrong,
Or else for private gain
Speaks what his heart disproves,
Who would his conscience blunt
And accept a lie for truth,
Or else accept inferior place
When God hath made us men,—
Mocks the God who made him,
Rebukes the highest attributes
That distinguish man from beast,
And makes himself less than man.

And what doth shade of Douglass think of thee?
(Since shades of martyrs o'er the present brood)
His pure, exalted Muse of liberty
Is raped by menial, cringing servitude.
Can worldly gain be more than righteousness?
Is wealth supreme, and right and manhood
less?
Shall gold rule godliness?

What hope is in what thou dost advocate?
Cite history to prove what thou dost preach;
Did nation ever rise to noble state
By groveling fore'er as thou dost teach?
Can Ethiopia e'er hope to rise
If she for others' wrongs apologize—
If she submit to lies?

Since worlds began to move and men contend,
The right of life and liberty were first;
Free and respected they who would not bend—
To kiss the rod were to be deemed accursed.
And wrong has never bowed his head to right
Except beneath the sword of those who fight;
To such will come the light.

"The life is more than meat," the Saviour said,
"The body more than raiment" that we wear;
To aim of life is *not* for gold nor bread,
But for a nobler life man to prepare.
And better far that man should die unborn
Than sell the soul he cannot call his own
To reign on Mammon's throne.

Thy life has been a curse upon thy race,
Nor hast thou spoken save to trade for gold;
Thy servile creed hath brought thy race disgrace,
But brought to thee the millions thou dost hold.
Ah! nobler far to fill a nameless grave
Than reign a hired tool, a pliant knave—
'Twere better die than slave!

"In word and deed unmanned," and yet unshamed,
"From birth till death enslaved" to other men;
Our highest ends and aims thou hast defamed—
Who freedom prize seek more than bread to win.
The freedom bought at cost of millions' blood
Is bartered out the world's vile pelf to hoard,
As Judas sold his God.

When fearful storms our brightest hopes would blast
Thou leavest our fated ship alone at sea,
And into silence slink till all is past,
Or else thy arm doth join the enemy;
The crisis past—we dying see thee rise
Upon the arm that doomed our energies—
Thy race thy sacrifice.

And what has followed in the wake of thee?
Her civil, moral, intellectual death,
Her franchise rights, the boon of liberty,
They die defeated by thy blighting breath—
The dwarfing of her best and brained schools,
Dread ostracisms, crimes, and lynching rules,
Thy race the prey of fools.

And valiant men shall mock thy idol god—
'Twas lust for power defeated men of old;
And moth and rust shall eat thy ill-got hoard,
Or thieves break thru and prey upon thy gold.
So long as Freedom sheds her potent flame,
Men will arise to hiss the traitor's name
Who sold his race to shame.

Evolution.

The Scientific men declare
That man from monkey came;
But prided Christian minds regard
The theory with shame,
And marvel now presumptuous men
Blaspheme Jehovah's name.

And men who hold these varied views
With arguments have tried,
And clashed on learning's battle ground
To justify their side;
But when at last could not agree
Each said the other lied.

And theologs have spent their oil,
And spared no search nor pain
To cement all the scattered links
Thruout creation's chain
To put to naught the theory
The scientists maintain.

The horse began the size of fox,
At first his toes were five;
Alike thru years the lower forms
To higher forms arive;
And in the clash of weak and strong
The fittest will survive.

The weaker creatures died out
  Beneath their stronger foe,
Who metamorphosed himself somewhat
  As upward he did grow—
Thus parent-stocks were modified,
  Zoology will show.

Fair Science still comes to our aid;
  We find as we pursue,
The flea into grasshopper jumped,
  Then frog—and on he grew
To flying-squirrel—opossum next—
  Then into Kangaroo.

And, musing o'er his helpless state,
  The poor disgruntled snail
Took to the water and became
  A thing of more avail;
He changed to minnow,—shad—then shark,
  To porpoise—into whale.

The lightning-bug bemoaned his size—
  A change he underwent;
He grew to humming-bird,—then snipe,
  And still was discontent;
He grew to grouse—to pheasant next,
  And then to peacock went.

And even so man might have been
  An insect or a worm;
No higher thought could he conceive

Except to eat and squirm;
Till one day eating he grew fat,
And found his voice was firm.

Then Evolution soon commenced
And, growing fast, began
From worm—to mouse—then rat—then fox
(From speck into a span)
And up he climbed—to wolf—then dog—
Then monkey—into man.

Then speaks in wrath the theolog
The scientists to damn;
"Your reasoning is blasphemy—
Your theory a sham;
You may be monkeys grown from worms—
God made me as I am!"

Now I'm not free to spend my views
For fear I may regret;
But still despite how man came forth,
One can not well forget,
The evolution's incomplete—
Some men are monkeys yet.

Nor am I judge which thing is true,
I know not of the facts;
But men have monkey antics yet,
And some have monkey acts;
And some lack nothing save the tails
To curl above their backs.

The First Lie.

I was twelve or somewhat younger,
Pompey just a lad thirteen;
We as brothers played together,
Watched the cows out on the green.
Days of youth at times were sweetest,
Oft they soured into gall;
In our climb for youthful honors,
We would often have a fall.
It was in the heat of Summer,
Out beneath the orchard boughs,
Where we sat "jack-stones" a-playing,
As we watched the grazing cows.
But the games went all contrary,
And I lost them all somehow;
I prefered a charge of cheating,
And we fell into a row.
Stones at once commenced to flying,
And the missiles flew apace;
When I stopped to find a swear-word
His fist landed in my face.
Stars began at once to twinkle,
But I clinched him like a man,
And we fought and tugged and tussled,
Only as two brothers can.
When the same blood meets in battle,
Sympathies are laid aside;

And we fought like brave young demons,
  Till each other bled and cried.
Father dropped his reins to listen,
  Soon he stood as referee;
As he rushed down thru the orchard,
  He brought sprigs from many a tree.
Vengeance shone on his forehead,
  As he trod the orchard path;
In his face was writ our judgement,
  In his brow paternal wrath.
But before he used his weapons,
  Both agreed by wink of eye,
To combine to foil judgement,
  Thru the medium of a lie.
Quick as thought the scheme was settled,
  Neither of our eyes yet dry;
Pompey swore we both were playing—
  I at once confirmed the lie.
Ah! the old man stood dumbfounded,
  Palor o'er his features came,
Knowing we had broke his teachings,
  And had lied to hide the shame.
But we clung to our decision,
  Nothing then could disunite;
"But," said he, "you both were crying,
  And there must have been a fight!"—
"Father, we have not been fighting;
  We were playing and at peace,
And the water you discover
  Must have come down off the trees."

"If you rascals can afford to
Look at me and tell such lies—
I am too amazed to whip you!"
And he left us in surprise.

Ah! we saved the day that evening,
Tho since then the years divide,
Still reflection doth condemn me,
For I fear—somebody lied!

The Voice in the Wilderness.

Deep as God's eternal years,
Sad as Christ's atoning tears,
Dread as heart-string rent apart,
Are the pangs that thrill and smart
Deep within the black man's heart.
Years of unrequited toil,
In the mould and mill to moil:
He to bear the lash and load,
Hunger's grip and spoiler's goad;
Toil and grime his lot by day,
Fill the mart where others prey;
He to bear the dust and heat,
Smooth the road for others' feet;

He like patient ox to plod,
Bruised beneath the chastening rod,
Tho the load be crushing hard,
Still forbid to call on God.
He to give his blood and brawn,
And himself another's pawn ;
He to die for others' good,
Feed another's soil with blood ;
He to ask nor fare, nor fee,
Neither life nor liberty ;
He to make the weak man strong,
His reward, abuse and wrong.
This the recompence they give,
Hounds to hunt the fugitive
Fleeing from the cruel lash,
Where Oppression leaves his gash ;
Where the mob doth burn and lynch,
Where his blood their thirst doth quench ;
Where, despite the boast of laws,
Men are wronged without a cause.
This my country ? cruel Dame !
O for a mantle to hide her shame !
O for tears to wash her guilt
For the blood her hands have spilt !
This the land my heart must pride
Where my father bled and died !
Land that boasts of slavery,
Cruel Hate and tyranny ?
Where the poor unheeded die,
Christianity a lie,

Human brotherhood a snare,
Liberty a vague despair ;
Where to be with right is wrong,
Where the weak crushed by the strong ;
Where to be a man is crime,
Where the worthy dare not climb ;
Where the Inquisition's paw
Serves to execute the law ;
Where manhood is but a name,
Where the fool is raised to fame,
And is lifted up in song
If his creed should serve the strong ;
Where the weak must bend and bleed,
Premium put on lust and greed.
Even in the halls of state
True men dare not advocate
Justice for the poor and weak,
They are doomed if once they speak ;
Even they who rule the throne
Help the hellish business on.
Public sentiment will not
Dare forgive the bane and blot
Should, perchance, co-workers meet
To adjust the wrongs of state,
And in mutual friendship feel
That the nation's highest weal,
That the people's greatest good
Demands united brotherhood.
Yet within the dens of vice
All may offer sacrifice ;

All may freely enter in
Where the paths lead down to sin.
All in fellowship may blend
Where the lures of lust contend,
Where the harlot spreads her arms,
And where vice displays its charms;
Where the serpent hides his stings,
And upon the victim springs;
Where the biting viper darts,
Where the adder's poison smarts,
All in brotherhood may dwell
On the road that leads to hell.

This the land demands my praise
And the service of my days?
This the "land of liberty?"
This the land that men call "free"?
Free, indeed, if they be strong,
Freer still to do the wrong;
Free to persecute the weak,
Free to doom and damn the meek;
Free to rob and cheat, and lie
With no fear of penalty;
Free to revel in the gain,
Wrung from hearts that plead in vain.

Raise the drooping heart, O God,
Grant the humble foot of sod
Where the wail of war is o'er,
Where the din is heard no more,
Where from blood men's hands are clean,
Where the spoiler is not seen,

Where his curse no more is heard,
Where men's hate no more is stirred,
Where the fowler's snare is not,
Where men's jealousies forgot,
Where the meek uninjured may
Look unto their God and pray,—
There to spend one hour of peace
Where brute force and lying cease.
From the cruel, crushing blows,
From the blighting, blinding woes,
From the cruel curse of foes,
Grant, O God, a day's repose.

Remember Brownsville.

Ah! it came like bolts of lightning
From a sky without a cloud,
And it fell with dread disaster,
And a crash severe and loud;
Shocked the sense of men and angels
With its morbid stench of sin—
'Twas the blow that fell at Brownsville
On those brave black soldier men.

O, the thought that makes it cruel
'Twas the gallant "Twenty-Fifth,"
Stripped of marks that stood for honor,
And the guns they conquered with.
Twenty years and six a soldier,
Loaded heavy with rewards,
And the guns that decked their shoulders
Had become their idol gods.

Ah! 'twould be not half so cruel,
But they served their country well,
Saved the life of him who slew them,
Snatched their country back from hell.
Ethiope doth pin a flower
On her gallant soldiers' graves,
And she drops a tear in mourning
For the slaying of her braves.

From the hill tops to the valleys—
Everywhere the murmurs roll;
It is "Brownsville," "Brownsville," "Brownsville,"
It has stirred the Negro's soul;
For he feels the wrong and outrage,
And he meets it with a frown—
And this mighty Ghost of "Brownsville"—
It will never, never down.

And of all the wrongs and outrage
Long, long will the race recall
The deep burning shame of "Brownsville,"
"Most unkindest cut of all;"

And for once he is loth to pardon,
"Holy vengeance" is his theme—
The un-Holy Ghost of "Brownsville"
Is the Demon of his dream.

"Remember Brownsville" is the slogan,
It will be for coming years;
There lies curse without conviction,
Therein lie impending fears.
Blacks will learn to test their power,
Nor will bribe of office please;
For this baneful Ghost of "Brownsville"—
It will never give him ease.

Like the raging ghost of Banquo
That will live and never down,
So this dreadful Ghost of "Brownsville"
Stalks the land from town to town.
May it spread in big proportions,
Till it win a race renown;
For this awful Ghost of "Brownsville"
Will live on and never down.

Let the winds waft their good fortune,
Let the "evil days" bring wrong;
Black men will "Remember Brownsville,"
It shall be the life of song;
Martyr-like he serves the scaffold,
Bears the cruel lash of shame;
By the wounds his heart endureth
His oppressors rise to fame.

And we pine for acts of tyrants
And for Nero's cruel heart;
While the dread Sicilian Vespers
Makes atoning tear drops start;
But a race's heart is bleeding
For her braves which "Herod" slew;
And the Blacks will look on "Brownsville"
As their St. Bartholomew.

The Mob Victim.

And it was in a Christian land,
With freedom's towers on every hand,
Where shafts to civic pride arise
To lift America to the skies.
And it was on a Sabbath day,
While men and women went to pray.
I passed the crowd in humble mode
In going to my meek abode.
From out the crowd arose a cry,
And epithets began to fly;
And thus like hound they took my track—
My only crime—my face was black.
And so this Christian mob did turn
From prayer to rob, to rack and burn.

A victim helplessly I fell
To tortures truly kin to hell;
They bound me fast and strung me high,
Then cut me down lest I should die
Before their savage zeal was spent
In torturing to their hearts' content.
They tore my flesh and broke my bones,
And laughed in triumph at my groans;
They chopped my fingers, clipped my ears
And passed them round for souvenirs.
And then around my quivering frame
They piled the wood, the oil and flame;
And thus their Sabbath sacrifice
Was wafted upward to the skies.

A little boy stepped out the crowd,
His face was pale, his voice was loud:
"My ma could not get to the fun,
And so I came, her youngest son,
To get the news of what went on."
He stirred the ashes, found a bone—
(A bit of flesh was hanging on)
He bore it off a cherished prize,
A remnant of the sacrifice.

Alas! no doubt, the heathen reads
Of Christian lands of noble deeds
By men with Christian hardihood
To shield their race's womanhood;
And yet around my burning frame,
Quivering by the scorching flame,

Their women danced around the scene,
And each was christened "heroine."
They took my flesh as souvenirs,
And showed their pride with yells and cheers.
And this where men are civilized,
And idol worship is despised;
Where nations boast that God hath sent
The angel of enlightenment.
But while you sing America's pride,
Where men for liberty have died,
Compare the strain with double stress
To her reward for harmlessness,
When burning flesh makes sporty time,
And innocence is greatest crime.
O heathen minds on heathen strand,
What think you of a Christian land,
Where men and boys and women turn
From prayer to lynch, to rob and burn,
And oft their drowsy minds refresh
Thru sport in burning human flesh?
Yet none dare tell who led the band;
And this was in a Christian land.

Here and Hereafter.

Now you preach a lot of Heaven,
And you talk a lot of Hell,
But the future never troubles me—
'Tis plain as tongue can tell;
And it's mighty poor religion
That won't keep a man from fear;
For the next place *must* be Heaven,
Since 'tis Hell I'm having here.

Song to Our Women.

To women of my race I sing;
I feel your sadly solemn state;
Your honor—life's most sacred thing,
Hangs helpless 'twixt a dreadful fate.

O women of a struggling race,
How blest to keep your vestures clean,
When gilded bribes you needs must face,
And hounded by the race of men.

They shun you if you dare to stand,
And hiss your name if you are strong;
Reject your pride, they kiss your hand,
And hate you when you share their wrong.

To social planes ye must aspire,
If man's protection ye would claim;
Ye then must serve his base desire—
Your heritage, a shattered name.

He fain would pluck your choicest gem,
And rich your way with garlands pave;
Of gold he'd give a diadem,
Yet spurn you when you fall his slave.

And men of other races see
Your fearful plight that must prevail;
They see your want and poverty,
And gold is heaped at feet of Baal.

They hate the blood that made you black,
Yet love you for a sweeter tie;
Like hound they trail upon your track—
The only refuge is to die.

O God! what dread condition this,
When gold is heaped 'twixt hell and Thee;
To stand we meet the world's mad hiss,
To fall is gold—and infamy.

Dunbar.

The Muses tuned his harp with song—
Too sweet a strain to linger long,
The tension of the chords too great
For longer life to compensate.
He lived and loved like lamb at play,
He dreamed and sang his life away.
A genius of the lyric art,
He gave to man his all—his heart.
The world, unwilling to inspire,
Crushed his best music in his lyre,
And gave to broken rhyme the praise—
The merry music of his lays.
And yet he lifted up his race,
And gave it undisputed place
Among the masters of the age,
And gave himself as heritage.
The chord is broken in the lyre,
Quenched is the Muse's vestal fire;
The oil that fed the vestal flame
Illumes in Heaven the Poet's name.
And still, Sweet Singer, thou art near,
Thy merry music still doth cheer
The firesides, the camp, and road,
And gives a lightness to the load.
Sweet Spirit of a purer sphere,
We saw thee pass with holy tear;
But hope doth wring from tears their sting—
In better life thou still dost sing.

The Song of The Free.

The prayers of the wronged and oppressed rose
on high;
He bowed down the heavens and heard the
sad cry;
The earth shook and trembled, the mountains
were moved;
His might broke the shackles from those whom
He loved.

Up from the dread darkness of hell and despair,
Up from the dark dungeon like bird from the
snare;
And up from oppression and death of the sword—
I rise to sweet freedom and light of the Lord.

And up from death's valley with wickedness
soiled,
Where women and children are robbed and
despoiled;
Where virtue is helpless 'neath lust of vile men,
I rise where the glories of freedom begin.

I sing the sweet songs and I breathe the pure air
Of life long denied in the Vale of Despair;
My chains have been melted in Liberty's flame,
I leave my vile shackles in hands whence they
came.

I look to the hills and my strength comes apace,
I gird up my loins and prepare for the race;
And Liberty's angel's unfolding the scroll,
While sweet bells of freedom wake fires in the soul.

And slavery is conquered and crushed is its creed;
The souls of God's children no longer shall bleed;
For He hath decreed it and sealed it on high—
The wicked and all his devices shall die.

The wicked may triumph and prosper a day,
But on the dread morrow are wafted away;
The wind he hath sown doth sweep over his path,
And Death wraps around him God's mantle of wrath.

He lets the devices of wicked men run,
And offers to pardon before set of Sun;
Then in His dread vengeance confirmeth the Law—
His might doth lie hidden in weapons of war.

The pale horse has stumbled, the rider is thrown,
And Slavery's Demon of strength hath been shorn;
The spoiler's arm broken, his quiver laid bare,
And feet of the fowler are caught in his snare.

The cries of the captive are turned into song,
And daylight is sweeter since night has been long;

The wrong must be righted His word doth affirm,
And nations are spoiled at the turn of the worm.

The snare has been broken, the captive set free,
He eats the ripe fruits of a pure liberty;
He girdeth for battle, his march doth begin
Along with the phalanx of other free men.

He dare not look back on the sins of the past,
The future doth call with a loud trumpet blast;
His newly-born ship is put out to the sea,
To gather the harvest of sweet liberty.

And Ethiope's tears and her sorrows subside,
Her sackcloth and ashes alike laid aside;
She joins in the anthem of her newly-born,
And visions of gladness her features adorn.

And this be the song the triumphant may sing,
And this be the glory that humbly I bring;
Thy cup shall run over—O, trust in His word;
Thy might is sufficient with strength of the Lord.

And man yet shall heed the Original Plan,
And look on his brother as man unto man;
Let Love be the motto, or else come to shame,
For all of God's children are one and the same.

Song to The Pilot.

An Appeal to The Leaders of Men.

Hard by his post in the speeding train
Sat the brave engineer.
What if each moment more speed he gain!
Peerless he knows no fear.
High at the station the flag was up,
Warning of danger the train to stop;
Beyond the town
The bridge was down—
He met the yells of the crowd with a frown.
Madly he drove in the yawning deep,
Hard by his post lying fast asleep;
Unnumbered dead
Find wat'ry bed—
Who knows the stone where his loved one is laid?
Pilot at helm but fast asleep;
List to the tones of the dismal deep—
Many fond hearts in the depths asleep—
Pilot, awake! awake!

Onward thru life in our fleeting train,
Who is at the helm to guide?
Some sleeping pilot? We sail in vain,
Drifting along the tide;
Warnings of danger we fail to read,
Flag on the sign post we fail to heed.

The depths below
Of sin and woe
Harbor a danger which no heart can know.
Swiftly we sail our journey along,
Gaily we sing our soul-cheering song:
Who knows the fate
Lying in wait?
Who is at the helm of the old ship of state?
Who is at the helm to guide aright
Safe from the perils of the night?
List to the chimes from the bells of night—
Calling, awake! awake!

High on life's plain where dominion slings
Arrows of power down,
Who dares to chide the vain pride of kings,
Or scorn the tyrant's frown?
O brilliant statesman, the pride of the years,
God gives thee power to dry our tears.
The humble sigh,
To God they cry—
How canst thou crumbs of God's justice deny?
Heroes are they who the nations would save;
Liberty sits in the crown of the brave.
Whose soul so great
To advocate
Justice and right at the old helm of state?
Who is at the helm to guide aright
Safe from the dangers and snares of the night
Into that haven, Eternity bright?
Pilot, awake! awake!

Steptoe Brown.

I always liked the doctrine that the people often teach:
That "All that glitters is not gold," and "Practice what you preach."
And still I think the poet might have added to his theme,
That folks as well as other "things are not just what they seem."
Now Steptoe Brown of our town was loved by bad and good,
But as a Christian didn't walk as others thought he should.
Not that his hands were tainted with the blood of fellowman,
Nor yet because some worldly sin had visited his clan.
He wore no robe of righteousness, his hands were clean, no doubt,
But secrets of his silent life he never would let out.
He made no boast of piety nor advertised his creeds,
He spent his life in doing the most unpresuming deeds.
His heart was free and open and no Christian could deny,

His sympathy was near to soothe the humble
children's cry;
His hand was offered to the weak to lift them
out the lurch,
But still complaint was made because he seldom
went to church.
And like a tale of gossip that upon the wind is
spent,
This little grudge was wafted round and gath-
ered as it went;
Till soon it had developed that the real talk of
the town
Was centered round none other than this non-
churchgoing Brown.
And when prayer meetings opened and "de-
terminations" told
Of all the things they *hoped to do* by members
young and old,
Each told his "hope of heaven" with a sobbing
and a tear,
While cool and quiet Steptoe Brown sat posing
in the rear.
When one by one began to hint of happenings in
the town
All their "determinations" changed to reprimands
of Brown,
While he still unmolested having nothing much
to say
Kept living out his destiny in his own quiet way.

Some thought it strange the preacher always
took the side of Brown,
And never said a word to run his reputation
down.
As deep within the rugged mounds there sleep
the golden grains,
So deep within the rugged life there lives within
the veins
A nobler impulse born of God as from the heart
it springs,
It lives for good could we but know life's hidden
secret things.
And so the thing kept working to its sad and
bitter end,
But Brown swelled the collection plate—the
preacher was his friend,
Till finally the church rose up and called the
preacher down
And threatened revolution, so he ceased defend-
ing Brown.
"A false pretender, hypocrit, backslider," was
the cry,
"Eternal torment shall be his, alas! when he shall
die."
They fiercely plied their Gospel whip and pounded
him quite well,
And then consigned his needy soul to one eternal
hell.
But many a righteous member in later days
did find

Their time cut short and had to leave this "hypocrit" behind;
And when at last they found they had this solemn debt to pay
They sighed for Brown to see that their remains were put away.
And finally the preacher, too, lay down to pay his debt,
His face turned up in agony, his eyes with tears were wet;
He sighed "My race is finished, but, O Lord, my task's not done,
For I have failed to save a soul Thy adversary won."
He turned his eyes to heaven and he closed them with a frown—
His dying words were these, "O Lord, my soul is grieved for Brown."
And when he entered Heaven's gate and looked the records o'er,
He looked to find his members who had gone on just before;
He found them not, but yet he found charged up against their name,
They had slandered all their neighbors and were doomed to woe and shame.
"Alas!" he groaned, "my flock is lost and doomed to misery,
If righteous man is hardly saved where can that sinner be?"

"And so to see what shame fell Brown I'll look
the records o'er:
Here's where he helped a beggar oft and shel-
tered many poor,
And here he soothed a broken heart, and strange
the thing appears,
He gave the orphans meat and bread and dried
the widow's tears."
And as he closed the register he sighed and
dropped it down,
And there stood gazing in his face this very Step-
toe Brown.

Dixon Shall Not Play Tonight.

It was heralded thru the city,
News that shocked the Christian ear,
And in letters bold placarded,
That the "Clansman" would appear;
But the sturdy strength of Justice
Lent its force to Christian men,
Who rose up in indignation
To repel this power of sin.

Black men cleared the decks for action,
Joined as one a thousand strong,
Told the Mayor of that City
That the "Clansman" was all wrong;
In their brow was grim decision,
In their strength was manhood's might;
Sang they out in one dread chorus:
"Dixon shall not play to-night!"

And the news spread thru the City
Like wild fires in the West,
Touched the moral sense of thousands,
Moved the soul within each breast.
There as pilot stood the black man,
Looking unto God for right;
He protested unto Heaven—
"Dixon shall not play to-night!"

Wrung and wronged by moral slander,
Once the Negro's soul was stirred,
For the moral death of millions
Lay within that woeful word;
Thus to shun the dread contagion
And avoid its bane and blight,
Christian bells took up the chorus—
"Dixon shall not play to-night!"

Prayers of thousands rose to Heaven
'Gainst this moral pestilence;
And a cloud hung o'er the city
Pouring out a sweet incense;

Spoke a voice behind the shadows—
"God is on the side of right;
Sing it out among the people,
Dixon shall not play to-night!"
So this caravan of evil
Packed their tents and went away;
Moral plague was once averted,
For the "Clansman" did not play.
Moral forces held that city
With their iron grip of might;
On the gates shone forth the warning—
"Dixon shall not play to-night!"
And this preacher of the Gospel,
Ere he rang a race's knell,
Met his Waterloo thru black men,
And like Lucifer he fell.
On the one side Wrong and Slander,
On the other God and Right;
And for once if not forever,
Dixon did not play that night.

The Poet's Adieu.

Adieu, my little Volume,
Whate'er fate may impend,
The Spirit that be in thee
Thy rightful course defend.

Should fame or favor bide thee,
Goodwill of men betide thee,
Thy humble Muse still guide thee—
Trust not tame praise alone.

Go forth—if men refuse thee,
If Slander's tongue abuse thee,
If cruel Fate should bruise thee,
Rise up and struggle on!

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